

Remarks:

These remarks are responsive to the Office action dated September 24, 2007. Prior to entry of this response, claims 1-13 were pending in the application. By way of this response, claims 1, 2, 5, 8, 10, 12, and 13 are amended, and claims 3, 4, and 11 are cancelled. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the application and allowance of the pending claims.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-8 and 11-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Number 6,663,375 (Ulcej).

Claims 1-2 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Patent Number 2001-293767 (Hajime).

Claims 1-10 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Number 6,017,207 (Druschel).

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Number 4,439,125 (Dieckmann).

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Number 4,125,350 (Brown).

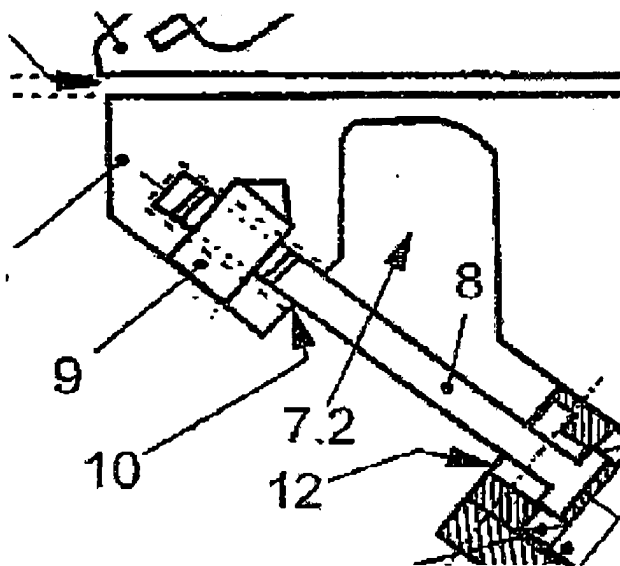
Applicants have amended claim 1 to include elements from claims 3, 4, and 11. Claim 1 as currently amended recites in part:

wherein a first end of each of the plurality of lever elements is mounted in a groove in an exit region of the flexible lip element, and a second end of each of the plurality of lever elements pivotably engages with a slide in a die body or a retaining element associated therewith, the slide being supported with respect to the die body and/or the retaining element of the flexible lip element;

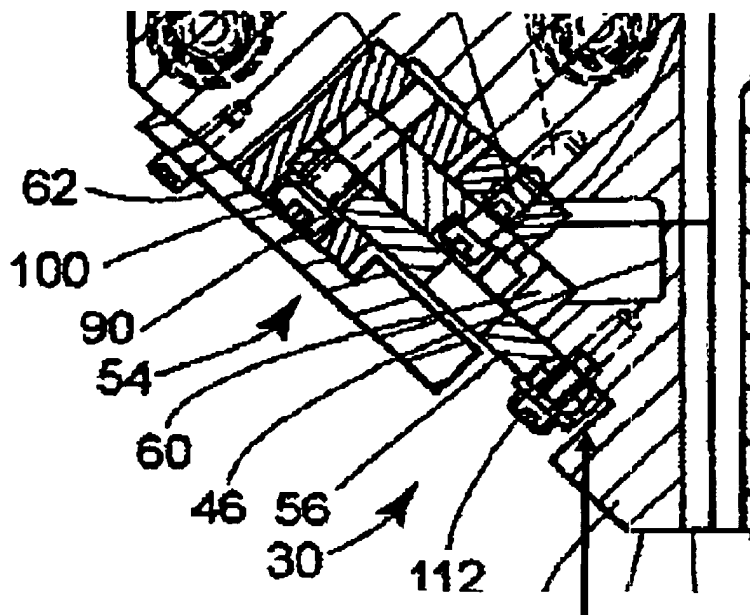
wherein a gap height of the flow cross section between the respective oppositely situated lip elements can be modified by a linear motion of the slide in an X direction as the result of pivoting of the lever elements about an angle.

Therefore, claim 1, as currently amended requires that modification of the gap height is by the linear motion of the slide as the result of pivoting of the lever elements about an angle and further requires that the first end of each of the lever elements is mounted in a groove in the exit region of the flexible lip element.

As shown in FIG. 1 of the pending application, which has been reproduced below in part for sake of convenience, a first end of lever element 8 is mounted in groove 10 in the exit region of the flexible lip element.



Applicants have examined Ulcej and have been unable to find any teaching of a plurality of lever elements that are mounted in a groove in the exit region of the flexible lip element. FIG. 2 of Ulcej demonstrates this deficiency and has been reproduced below in part for sake of convenience.

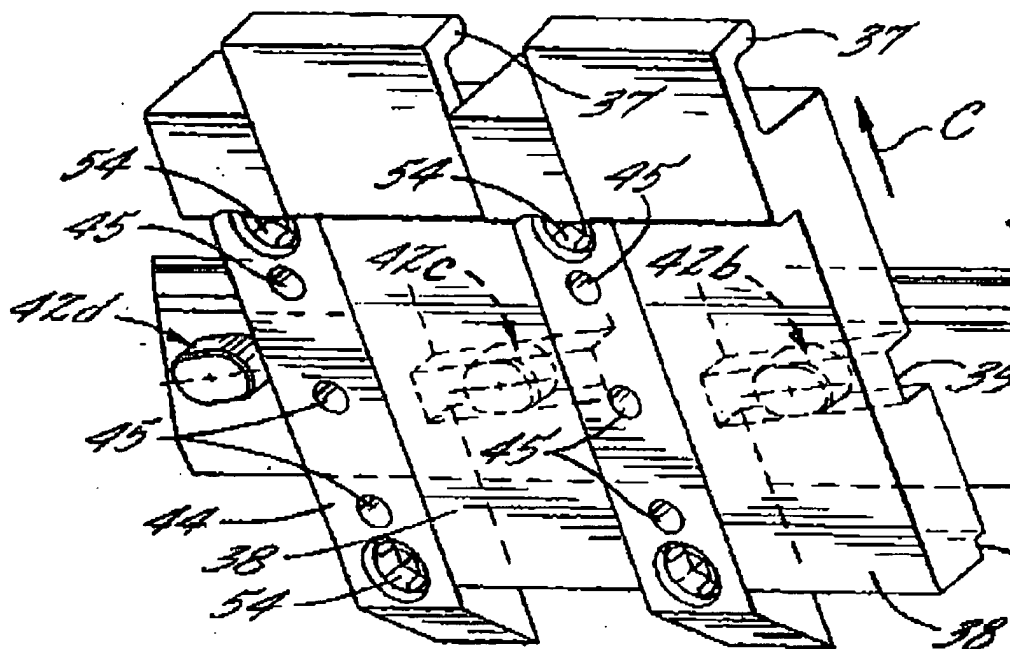


No Groove Is Provided

In contrast, Ulcej teaches a recess 60, which is only partially covered by plate 62. See the description at column 4, lines 45 – 52, for example.

Thus, as Ulcej does not teach each and every element of claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of claim 1 and all dependant claims in view of Ulcej be withdrawn for at least this reason.

Applicants have also examined Druschel and have been unable to find any teaching of modifying a gap height of the flow cross section between the respective oppositely situated lip elements by a linear motion of the slide in an X direction as the result of pivoting of the lever elements about an angle. In contrast, Druschel teaches push/pull blocks 38 with angled slots 39, which translate relative to pins 42, but do not pivot as required by claim 1 as currently amended. Furthermore, fingers 37 as provided by Druschel would also preclude rotation of blocks 38 while blocks 38 are placed between spacer mounts 44. FIG. 5 of Druschel further demonstrating this contrast has been reproduced below for sake of convenience.

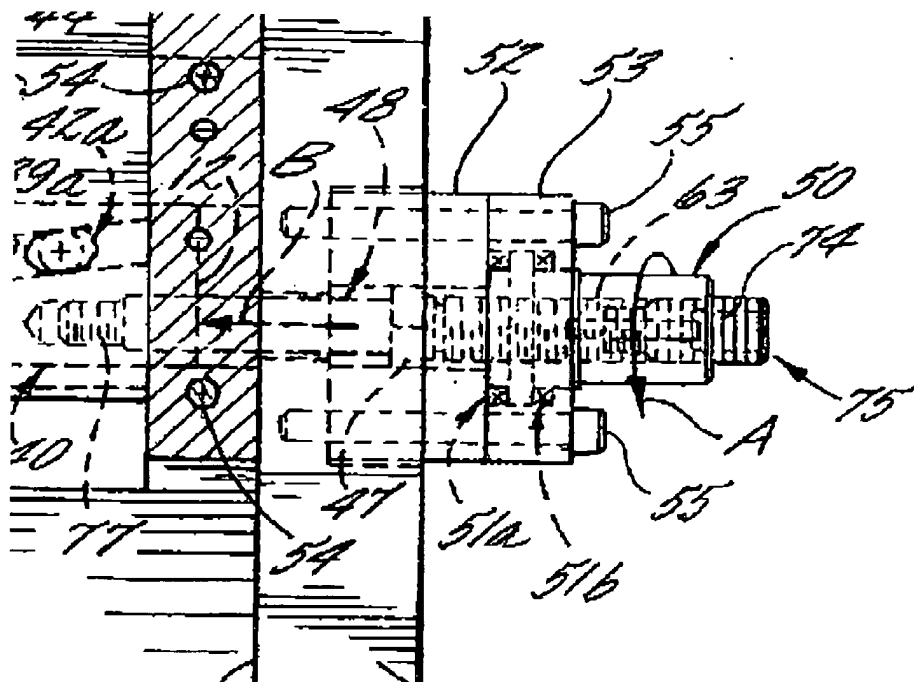


Thus, as Druschel does not teach each and every element of claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of claim 1 in view of Druschel and all dependant claims be withdrawn for at least this reason.

Furthermore, with regards to claims 9 and 10, Applicants have examined Druschel and have been unable to find any teaching of a slide that is supported by bearing elements. The Examiner, in rejecting claims 9 and 10, has indicated that:

With respect to claims 9 – 10 and 13, the reference also teaches that the slide in the recess is supported by a plurality of needle roller bearing elements (column 7, lines 30 – 50; column 8, lines 1 – 15); wherein the slide can be linearly moved, and under pushing or pulling loads is supported by a plurality of bearing elements (column 7, lines 30 – 50; column 8, lines 1 – 15);

Applicants respectfully disagree with this assertion. Druschel at columns 7 and 8 describes bearings 51, which are located on the structure for moving actuator bar 40 as shown in FIG. 1 which has been reproduced below in part for sake of convenience.



However, claims 9 and 10 require that the slide is supported by bearing elements. An example of a slide that is supported by bearing elements is shown in FIGS. 1 – 3 of the present application as indicated at 14 and 15. Applicants respectfully submit that bearings 51 as taught by Druschel do not support actuator bar 40 as recited by the claimed elements, but instead enables adjustment nut 50 to rotate as indicated in FIG. 1 at A.

Thus, as Druschel does not teach each and every element of claims 9 or 10, Applicants respectfully submit that these rejections be withdrawn for at least this additional reason.

Furthermore, Applicants request that the rejection of claim 1 and all dependent claims as currently amended be withdrawn in view of Hajime, Dieckmann, and Brown. Applicants respectfully submit that none of these

Page 9 of 10

Application Number 10/561,736

Response Date: January 23, 2008

Reply to Office Action of September 24, 2007

references teaches all elements of claims 3, 4, and 11 as incorporated into claim 1 with entry of this amended. As such, Applicants respectfully request that these rejections be withdrawn for at least this reason.

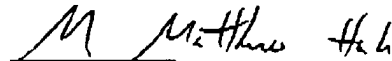
Conclusion

Applicants believe that this application is now in condition for allowance, in view of the above amendments and remarks. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner issue a Notice of Allowability covering the pending claims. If the Examiner has any questions, or if a telephone interview would in any way advance prosecution of the application, please contact the undersigned attorney of record.

Please charge any cost incurred in the filing of this Response, along with any other costs, to Deposit Account No. 503397.

Respectfully submitted,

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